

Giving power an extra boost on Bagram



Story and photo by Spc. Kelly Hunt
4th Public Affairs Detachment

BAGRAM, Afghanistan—Prime Power is switching power source suppliers, ditching the former provider for a more constant, reliable one and upgrading to give Bagram more power in the process.

General Electric Energy Rentals was relieved of duty eight months into their contract due to the amount of unscheduled outages and failure to meet the required amount of Mega Watts necessary to keep this base running and operating in a forward motion.

“A replacement was brought in and that should reduce the number of unscheduled outages considerably,” said Sgt. 1st Class Robert Spaulding, the last of the 249th Engineer Battalion Prime Power staying behind to ensure the transition goes smoothly. “In conjunction with bringing that replacement in, we decided to upsize as well based on growth to give us the additional capacity to continue to expand the distribution on base.”

International American Products will be taking over for GEER in the near future. During that transition time between power companies, their may be a few setbacks that troops could experience, but it is expected to be short-lived.

“They’re going to notice intermittent scheduled outages, probably through Dec. 22,” said Spaulding. “We try our best to inform every one of outages, scheduled outages are briefed at the morning BUB.”

Troops are asked to stay away from the power plant when outages do occur. Any distractions to employees will slow down the process of getting everything up and running again in the shortest amount of time

Chris Dolan and Pereran of Aggreko, a company subtracted by the new Bagram power supplier, International American Products, repair supply cables last week.

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Rumsfeld praises Georgia for assistance in war on terror

Story by John D. Banusiewicz
American Forces Press Service

TBILISI, Georgia—With mounting concern in this former Soviet republic over Russia’s behavior in the region and a new interim government still finding its feet, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld toured a U.S.- sponsored

military training facility and met with key leaders here Friday.

Since growing but peaceful demonstrations forced the Nov. 23 resignation of former President Eduard Shevardnadze, Nino Burdzhnadzze has served as acting president. She met with Rumsfeld along with acting State Minister Zurab Zhvania, acting National Security Adviser Tedo Japaridze, and Tbilisi city council president

Mikhail Saakashvili, who led the opposition to Shevardnadze and is a leading candidate in the presidential election set for Jan. 4. Burdzhnadzze is not a candidate in the election.

In a joint press conference with Burdzhnadzze after the meeting at the presidential palace here, Rumsfeld said the United States agrees with Geor-

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World News (Compiled from CNN.com)



Afghan men walk past the children's graves at a cemetery in Hutala.

Local Afghans "understanding"

(CNN) – Afghan villagers are "understanding" but "not happy" following the apparent deaths of nine children in an American airstrike, a U.S. military spokesman has said.

The children and a man were found dead in the central Afghanistan village of Hutala after the A-10 airstrike intended for a suspected Taliban terrorist, Lt. Col. Bryan Hilferty said Sunday.

He added that investigators had not determined that Saturday's strike killed the children. Military spokesmen also said they did not know whether the dead man was the intended target.

Hilferty, based at Bagram Air Base north of the capital Kabul, said the villagers in Hutala were calm as they participated in "several long talks" with military officials and representatives from the provincial governor's office.

"They're pretty understanding," said Hilferty, who was among the U.S. officials who traveled to the village, about 160 kilometers (100 miles) southwest of Kabul. American military representatives later attended an outdoor service at a mosque for the children who died.

"They've been through years of war. They're not happy, but I think it meant a great deal to them that my commander, Gen. [Lloyd] Austin, came out and personally expressed his condolences."

"The biggest thing is we want to express our condolences no matter what happened," Hilferty said.



Robert Mugabe

Zimbabwe withdraws from Commonwealth membership

HARARE, Zimbabwe—Zimbabwe pulled out of the Commonwealth on Sunday after the organization's leaders extended a suspension imposed after a widely criticized election last year.

The government said in a statement that President Robert Mugabe told the leaders of Jamaica, Nigeria and South Africa when they phoned him one after another Sunday that Harare did not accept the Commonwealth's position.

"Accordingly, Zimbabwe has withdrawn its membership from the Commonwealth with immediate effect," it said.

A summit meeting of the group, comprising 54 nations that are mostly former British colonies, on Sunday decided not to readmit Zimbabwe after suspending it last year on grounds that Mugabe rigged his re-election and persecuted his opponents.

The issue dominated the summit in the Nigerian capital Abuja, splitting the group along lines of race and wealth.

The Zimbabwe government said the three leaders who called tried to persuade Mugabe not to quit:

"In response, President Mugabe indicated to each of the three leaders that the decision was unacceptable, as the Republic of Zimbabwe would settle for nothing short of its removal from the Commonwealth suspension and agenda."

It said Mugabe told them: "Anything that you agree on Zimbabwe which is short of this position, no matter how sweetly worded, means Zimbabwe is still a subject of the Commonwealth. This is unacceptable. This is it – it's quits and quits it will be."

The summit opened the way for a possible return if Zimbabwe engaged in reconciliation with the opposition.

Israeli forces kill three in Gaza

JERUSALEM—Israeli troops shot and killed three Palestinians on Saturday in Gaza — two militants who approached the border fence with Israel and a Palestinian seen crawling through an off-limits area near the town of Rafah in southern Gaza, a military spokesman said Saturday.

The Israeli spokesman said troops opened fire at suspicious figures near the fence in northern Gaza late Friday night, but were initially unaware of any casualties.

During a search of the area on Saturday, troops discovered two bodies clothed in camouflage gear, armed with hand grenades and carrying a 25-kilogram explosive, the spokesman said.

Palestinian security officials identified the two as Asraf Al-Haya, 21, and Abdul Kareem Sokar, 20, and said they were farmers watering their fields when they were shot by Israeli soldiers.

The Rafah incident took place late Friday night, but troops did not find the body until searches were conducted early Saturday, the military spokesman said.

Palestinian security officials identified the Palestinian as 16-year-old Jihad Akhras, a resident of Rafah. The Israeli military spokesman said the dead Palestinian was unarmed and it was unclear if he had any connection to militant groups.

Greek court issues convictions

ATHENS, Greece—A Greek court has convicted two men of being the chief assassin and mastermind of the 17 November terrorist group.

Alexandros Giotopoulos was found guilty of planning murders, including that of the British attaché Stephen Saunders, by a three-judge court Monday after a nine-month trial.

The 58-year-old French-born academic steadfastly denied any links to the group.

Nineteen people, including one woman, have been charged with multiple accusations. Others convicted included the group's key hit man, Dimitris Koufodinas, The Associated Press reported. Anthee Carassava, a journalist in Athens, told CNN Giotopoulos showed no reaction when the verdicts were read out.

"The ringleader faced, as expected 900 charges, and was found guilty in almost all of those. It was surprising to see him in court remain almost blase.

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possible.

These inconveniences are due to switching the old equipment to the new that, after completion, will provide base with more reliable power. "It's part of the transition and we're trying to make it as painless as possible," he said. "We ask that people be patient and understand that it is a transition. The advantages of doing this are that we'll have additional capacity and more reliable power."

Over the last 18 months, Bagram's power usage increased by nearly 550 percent, transforming the base camp into a small city, said Spaulding.

"With the large amount of new construction, we need the additional capacity to provide power to all the additional facilities," he said. "It's all part of quality of life basically; providing Prime Power to everyone ensures that they have heat in the winter, a refrigerator and microwave in their tents.

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Georgia that Russia needs to live up to its obligations under the so-called Istanbul Accords of 1999 to withdraw its forces from Georgia, except for a 2,500- to 3,000-member peacekeeping force in a troubled region of the country.

"As I recall, Russia agreed to the Istanbul Accords, which suggests to me there was unanimity on the subject, and that would suggest to me that it was probably a pretty good idea," Rumsfeld said.

Calling Georgia a "staunch friend of the West," Rumsfeld said the United States appreciates the country's help with Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and Operation Iraqi Freedom, where the republic has a special operations forces contingent in the coalition. He also noted

Georgia's participation in NATO's Partnership for Peace Program and expressed delight in the interim government's reaffirmation of that participation.

"NATO, of course, is an alliance of democracies," he said, "so we look toward the political, the economic as well as the military reforms that are the kinds of things that will move Georgia's approach more closely to those of the democracies of the West."

Burdzhanadze expressed thanks to the United States for the assistance it has provided to Georgia, and said her government is proceeding with the development of democratization and also is moving forward on the reforms "which are necessary for the normal development of our country."

Both Rumsfeld and Burdzhanadze praised

"(We're) trying to just make it a bit more comfortable," Spaulding continued. "It's comfort and convince."

Though the increase of power is there, power plant personnel ask that troops and civilians living on base continue to conserve power.

"There's enough power for everybody on base; everybody's got heat, lights and electric, (but) we're still asking people to utilize the same amount of power they've been using," he said.

Power may seem plentiful at the moment, but abusing the excess can lead to outages and costs money.

Others that keep Bagram's power running smoothly are Inglett & Stubbs, a company contracted to install new electrical expansion, including all overhead, underground, interior, and exterior as well as various companies subtracted by them. Questions and concerns about power outages should be directed to the BDOC, said Spaulding. "They will put you in touch with the right people."

the success of a military cooperation effort called "Georgia Train and Equip," or GTEP. In the two-year, \$64 million program, U.S. special operations forces at first and later U.S. Marines have trained four battalions of infantry soldiers in Georgia. Rumsfeld visited the GTEP complex earlier in the day, meeting the Marines, soldiers and lone sailor assigned to the special training unit. The program began as an effort to give Georgia the wherewithal to deal with terrorists within the country's borders, and it's slated to conclude in May.

Burdzhanadze expressed the hope GTEP will continue in the future. Rumsfeld noted that while GTEP soon will end in its current form, the United States has an agreement to train a mechanized unit for Georgia, and that he anticipates continuation of military-to-military cooperation programs between the two countries.

Army updating DEERS for deployed RC Soldiers

ALEXANDRIA, Va.—The Army is scrambling to renew identification cards for deployed National Guard and Army Reserve Soldiers and update information for their family members in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System.

With the extension of Guard and Reserve Soldiers on active duty in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, the Army estimates as many as 55,000 Soldiers will need new identification cards while still in the theater of operations. Limited access to Intranet systems in these countries, and a widely dispersed population, officials said, make it necessary to expedite issuance of these cards. They said the cards convey benefits and privileges and also act as the Soldiers' Geneva Conventions card.

In addition to the mobilized Soldiers affected, there are an estimated 95,000 family members who will require new ID cards, and also require updated information in the DEERS system to continue their eligibility for services and access to facilities.

In order to update DEERS, a Soldier's tour end date must be updated

in the component personnel information systems, officials explained. They said updating this information depends on what type of extension the Soldiers fall under. Of the estimated 55,000 Soldiers that require ID cards, approximately 10,000 have already had their tour dates extended and DEERS information updated.

Reserve-component Soldiers on their first or second year of mobilization fall under Title 10 of the United States Code 12302 for a maximum of 24 month partial mobilization. Extension orders by unit, once approved, are forwarded from the Army G3 to theater.

Units will compile and forward a by-name roster of Soldiers who will be extended on active duty past 365 days through U.S. Army Human Resources Command-Alexandria to individual state Joint Forces Headquarters, AHRC-St Louis and the USAR Regional Readiness Commands. These rosters will help ensure all Soldiers are accounted for in the extension process in order to ensure correct eligibility for all benefits, officials said.

(Editor's note: Information provided by AHRC Public Affairs)

Top fifth-grade winners tell what freedom means to them

Story by Donna Miles
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON—Kevin Young, a 10-year-old boy living in San Diego recognizes how fortunate he is to live in the United States, “a country,” he wrote in the Weekly Reader’s Operation Tribute to Freedom essay contest, “that stands for freedom.”

Kevin’s essay was the top winner in the contest, not only among fifth-graders, but also among entries submitted by more than 8,000 students in grades three through 12 from across the country.

In his essay, “Freedom,” Kevin contrasted his life with those of children who don’t live in a country where freedom reigns. “I woke to the chirping of birds,” he wrote, not “the frightening sound of blasting bombs.” He dressed as he wanted for school, unlike the little girl who “could wear a veil or get whipped.” He went to school “to learn how to make the world a better place,” unlike the girl who “was not allowed, so she went to school in secret.”

Michelle Shepardson from Piti, Guam, who placed second in the essay contest among fifth-graders, shared Kevin’s appreciation for the freedoms in her life. But she also noted the many responsibilities freedom entails. “To preserve freedom, I will stand up for what is right and fight against what is wrong,” she wrote.

“The sad part of it all,” wrote Tyler DiCarlo from Metairie, La., whose essay placed third in the contest among fifth-grade applicants, “is (that) other countries fear the freedom we have in America.

“Unable to embrace this way of life,” Tyler wrote, “they desperately try to stop it.”

But, Tyler continued, “American citizens are filled with pride at what our freedom stands for. Many brave men and women lay down their lives for our freedom.

“Freedom is that senior citizen in the crowd with a tear rolling down his cheek. It is the giggles of a 2-year-old. It is the way of life for the United States of America.”

Bagram Air Base MWR presents

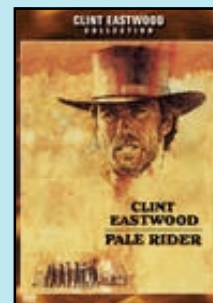
“Pale Rider”

1530Z at the MWR building:

A small mining town is terrorized by a local gangster, and salvation arrives in the form of a gun-toting preacher.

Tomorrow’s movie:

“Unforgiven”



Local weather

TWO-DAY REGIONAL WEATHER FORECAST:

	Today	Tuesday
Bagram:	Mostly Clear H: 57F L: 28F	Mostly Clear H: 55F L: 28F
Kandahar:	Partly Cloudy H: 70F L: 46F	Mostly Clear H: 61F L: 43F
Kabul:	Mostly Clear H: 59F L: 30F	Mostly Clear H: 57F L: 30F
Uzbekistan:	Partly Cloudy H: 55F L: 37F	Mostly Clear H: 53F L: 37F

Weather forecast courtesy of the Bagram Combat Weather Team

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Coalition Sports Zone

(Compiled from SI.com)



Clinton Portis nearly doubled his touchdown production for the season Sunday.

Denver climbs back into playoff race

DENVER – Clinton Portis had already scored four touchdowns, so Broncos quarterback Jake Plummer figured it was time to pound the ball into the line and salt away the win.

But receiver Rod Smith had other ideas. He wanted Portis to score and finish things off right.

That's just what he did.

Portis scored from 53 yards for his team-record fifth touchdown and finished with 218 yards, helping Denver stay in the AFC playoff hunt with a wild 45-27 victory over the Kansas City Chiefs on Sunday.

"Jake was like 'Just protect the ball, let's move the ball and we can run out the clock,'" said Portis who finished 10 yards short of his career high, set in the final game of 2002.

"Rod was like 'Just score.' And I did. I need to stop taking Jake's advice and listen to Rod more often."

Eagles beat Cowboys to get playoff berth

PHILADELPHIA – Donovan McNabb backed up a bold statement with another stellar performance.

McNabb threw for 248 yards and three touchdowns, helping the Eagles clinch a playoff spot with their eighth straight victory, 36-10 over the Dallas Cowboys on Sunday.

The Eagles (10-3), who have the best record in the NFC, can clinch their third straight division title with two more victories or one win and another loss by the Cowboys. Philadelphia hasn't lost since a 23-21 defeat in Dallas on Oct. 12.

The Cowboys (8-5) are 3-4 after a 5-1 start under Bill Parcells.

All along, McNabb has insisted the Eagles are the team to beat in the NFC East. Maybe they're the team to beat in the whole conference.

"We stayed confident, we stayed together and that's important," McNabb said.

Kings big man burns with triple-double



Al Harrington helped Indiana stay close with 17 points and nine boards off the bench.

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – Hundreds of fans waited inside Arco Arena for Brad Miller to return to the court for his postgame radio interview. They cheered him madly, and he acknowledged the greeting with a single fist pump.

Sacramento's faithful don't stand for losing, and Miller played a big part in getting the Kings back on track on their home floor.

Miller had 18 points, 15 rebounds and 10 assists in his first game against his former team, and the Kings overcame a season-high 21 turnovers for a 91-88 victory over the Indiana Pacers on Sunday night.

Peja Stojakovic had 27 points and five rebounds and Mike Bibby added 14 points for the Kings, who led by 16 in the third quarter of the emotional game that saw many players challenge the inconsistent officiating.

"All I know is that they hate Sacramento," Kings guard Bobby Jackson said of the referees. "That's East Coast basketball — grab and hold. They let the East Coast beat the West Coast up."

Matsui agrees to 3-year deal with Mets

NARITA, Japan – Japanese star Kazuo Matsui decided to join the New York Mets, accepting the team's three-year offer Monday.

"Last night, I thought about a lot of things and I narrowed it down to one team, and that team is the New York Mets," he said at a news conference at Narita International Airport.

Matsui planned to travel to New York immediately following the news conference. The Mets' offer was for about \$20 million over three years.

Meanwhile in New York, the Mets offered salary arbitration to their captain, 43-year-old left-hander John Franco. Coming back from reconstructive elbow surgery in May 2002, Franco went 0-3 with a 2.62 ERA and two saves in 38 games.

By offering arbitration, New York extended the period to re-sign Franco through Jan. 8.

"We made enough progress in the negotiations to offer John salary arbitration," Duquette said in a statement. "We are close to finding the parameters for the structure of a deal."

Nicknamed "Little Matsui," the shortstop is not related to New York Yankees outfielder Hideki Matsui. Matsui is a seven-time All-Star and a three-time Golde Glove winner in Japan, hitting .305 with 33 home runs and 84 RBIs last season for the Seibu Lions.

Afghanistan Hot Topics



(Compiled by CJTF-180 Public Affairs)

Report: Bin Laden to shift al Qaeda fighters from Afghanistan to Iraq

NEW YORK (PRNewswire) – At a secret meeting in Afghanistan, held last month during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, three senior representatives for Osama bin Laden gave the Taliban bad news: al Qaeda fighters would be shifting to a new front, *Newsweek* has learned.

According to Taliban sources, bin Laden's men told emissaries from Mullah Mohammed Omar, the elusive leader of Afghanistan's ousted fundamentalist regime, that al Qaeda would be diverting a large number of fighters from the anti-U.S. insurgency in Afghanistan to Iraq. al Qaeda also planned to reduce by half its \$3 million monthly contribution to Afghan jihadi outfits.

The sources tell *Newsweek* in the December 15 issue that this was all on the orders of bin Laden himself because the terror chieftain and his top lieutenants see a great opportunity for killing Americans and their allies in Iraq and neighboring countries such as Turkey. The Taliban sources complain that their own movement will suffer, report Special Correspondent Sami Yousafzai, South Asia Correspondent Ron Moreau and Senior Editor Michael Hirsh.

Bin Laden believes that Iraq is becoming the perfect battlefield to fight the "American crusaders" and that the Iraqi insurgency has been "100 percent successful so far," according to a Taliban participant at the mid-November meeting who goes by the nom de guerre Sharafullah. Fluent in Arabic, Sharafullah tells *Newsweek* he acted as the meeting's official translator.

Sharafullah said bin Laden was represented at the Ramadan meeting by three Arabs in their mid-40s who were armed with new Kalashnikovs and bedecked in hand grenades. The Arabs informed Mullah Omar's two representatives — one a former cabinet minister and the other a senior Taliban military commander — that bin Laden believed al Qaeda had to widen the scope of its anti-infidel efforts as new opportunities arose. According to Sharafullah, the al Qaeda representatives quoted bin Laden as saying, "The spilling of American blood is easy in Iraq. The Americans are drowning in deep, rising water." Many al Qaeda men are keen to go to Iraq, bin Laden's delegates at the meeting allegedly added, and they again quoted "the sheikh" as saying: "I'm giving men who are thirsty a chance to drink deeply."

Bin Laden, they said, had also decided to "reorganize the distribution of funding" by reducing al Qaeda's monthly payment to the Afghan resistance from \$3 million to \$1.5 million, according to Sharafullah. Bin Laden's men pointed out that raising and distributing funds has been complicated by the U.S. crackdown on jihadi charitable foundations, bank accounts of terror-related organizations and money transfers. Nonetheless, bin Laden wanted to "assure" the Afghan resistance that it would receive the promised amount. "We will never leave you alone," the terror chief allegedly said through his representatives.

Renegade Afghan said to be captured

PESHAWAR, Pakistan (AP) – A renegade Afghan warlord was arrested in a tribal area of Pakistan near the border with Afghanistan, an official said Sunday.

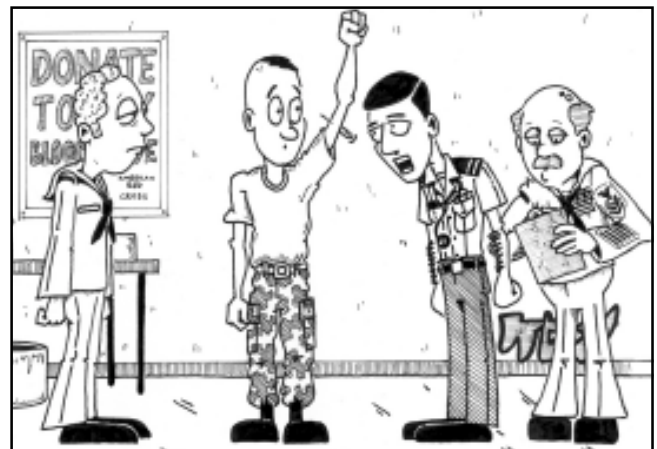
Bacha Khan Zadran - whose forces have at times fought alongside U.S. troops but also have battled with the country's U.S.-backed government - was taken into custody around Dec. 1 by Pakistani paramilitary troops guarding the border. A Zadran spokesman denied the warlord was arrested. It was not possible to independently confirm what had happened.

Zadran was detained along with three other unidentified Afghans at Dirdoni, a border checkpoint 120 miles southwest of Peshawar, the capital of the North West Frontier Province, said Syed Zaheer-ul Islam, a local administrative official. Local tribesmen in the area often support pro-Taliban militants in neighboring Afghanistan.

The official refused to say why Zadran was arrested, whether he had been charged, why there was a delay in announcing his capture, and whether Pakistan was discussing the case with Afghanistan.

Talking by satellite telephone from eastern Afghanistan on Sunday, Zadran spokesman Gamay Mohammadi denied the warlord was arrested and claimed he was in Pakistan for medical treatment. "He is in a hospital in Lahore for treatment for his heart" Mohammadi said, adding that he had just spoken with Zadran. Zadran was briefly appointed governor of Afghanistan's Paktia province in December 2001, but he was removed from the post after local officials, backed by their own militia, refused to allow him to enter the city and take office. Since then, his forces, which had allied themselves with U.S. troops in past military operations, have repeatedly tried to take small patches of territory in Afghanistan in defiance of the central government in Kabul, the capital.

"Oops."



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By Kevin Kilgore

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